UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
NEW MEXICO State College, New Mexico
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

NEW MEXICO TO BE REPRESENTED AT PMA MEET - C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee; W. Leslie Martin, Member of the Committee; and Archie M. Vance, Executive Officer, will attend the national conference of the Production and Marketing Administration to be held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, December 9-12.

According to the State Chairman, this is the first national PMA conference since PMA was established more than two years ago. Every State, Hawaii and Puerto Rico are to be represented at the conference.

Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson will be one of the featured speakers at the conference.

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ACP DEVELOPS FARM LEADERSHIP - One of the important results of the Agricultural Conservation Program has been the farm leadership developed through the farmer-elected committees, says C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee.

These farmers who are elected to county and community committees have become conservation minded and have developed a practical understanding of the kind of farming which will do most to save the soil and provide abundant production. They have also gained the confidence of businessmen as well as farmers in their communities and counties. Committeemen also have responsibilities connected with price supports, loan programs, marketing agreements and grain conservation. Through these activities they are becoming increasingly familiar with the broad phases of production and marketing which are nationwide and worldwide in scope.

Mr. Hemphill points out that this leadership is of primary benefit to consumers because through increased soil conservation, the consumer is assured of continued abundant production.

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DUTIES OF ACP COMMITTEEMEN REVIEWED - In connection with agricultural conservation committee elections which are being held, a number of persons not too familiar with the farm program have asked what do these committeemen do and how much do they get.

Answering these two questions, _____, Chairman of the _____County Agricultural Conservation Program, explained that committeemen are paid only for the time they are actually engaged in work on the agricultural conservation, sugar, price support and purchase programs. They are not on a weekly, monthly, or yearly salary. They are paid at a nominal rate per day, and only for the time actually put in on authorized program work.

He listed the duties of the community committeemen as follows:

Provide local leadership in developing and administering farm programs adapted to the needs of their community; fit programs to local conditions and recommend improvements and additions suggested by farmers; explain to farmers of the community the objectives and provisions of the farm programs and actively assist farmers in making use of them; conduct community meetings, committeemen elections, and assist in conducting marketing quota referendums; and cooperate with other community leaders in coordinating farm program activities.

Duties of the county committeemen are:

Develop and administer, under supervision of the State PMA committee, programs adapted to the needs of the county; with the aid of the community committeemen, keep farmers and others informed of the objectives, provisions, and progress of farm programs; determine results of farm programs in the county, submit reports as required, conduct meetings, elections, referendums, hearings, and investigations; be responsible for the operation of the county agricultural conservation office, employment of personnel, keeping expenses of the program within the county allocation of funds; and cooperate with other farm agencies and leaders in coordinating farm programs within the county.

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WHOSE TWO AND A HALF ACRES? - The next time you stand on the banks of a muddy stream and watch the silt-laden water rush by ask yourself this question, "Whose two and a half acres of land is that?"

In this way, _____, Chairman of the _____County Agricultural Conservation Committee, brings home the importance of soil and water conservation to everyone.

Mr. _____ points out that if all the harvested cropland in the United States were divided up evenly there would be about 2½ acres of land for each person. Only 25 years ago there was 3¼ acres per person.

It should be remembered further that the fertile soil on that 2½ acres may be only a few inches deep. The average for the United States is only about 6 inches.

The chairman states: "While farmers may own the land, all of us depend on that land for a living. From that 2½ acres must come practically all our food — fish the exception — and most of the fiber for our clothes. And, because some farmer is willing and has the equipment to till that 2½ acres for what he can get from the crops, many people do not have to raise their own food and fiber. That means there are enough people to build automobiles, run the railroads, practice law, teach school, or what have you. The large output per man is what makes our modern civilization possible. If each of us had to farm our share of the land all this would not be possible.

"So the next time you see a muddy stream you may well ask whose 2½ acres is now going down the river."

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WHERE THE POTATOES GO - As of November 17, Government purchases of the 1947 crop of potatoes amounted to 18.2 million bushels, only about 5 percent of the total estimated production of 379.9 million bushels.

Of these purchases, about 11 percent has gone into school lunch and welfare distribution, 19 percent into export, 8 percent into the manufacture of starch and flour, almost 4½ percent into dehydration, 9 percent into livestock feed, 29 percent into alcohol, and 16 percent into commercial storage. Up to the end of October, losses had totaled about a half-million bushels, or slightly over 1/10 of 1 percent of estimated total production.

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FARMERS URGED TO FEED HAY INSTEAD OF GRAIN - In the effort to save grain, U. S. Department of Agriculture authorities point out that the various kinds of legume hay can be used to replace grain in the diet of hogs.

For years farmers have fed their hogs, particularly brood sows, alfalfa meal, alfalfa hay and red clover hay. In areas where alfalfa or red clover are not available soybean or lespedeza hay may be fed.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture Experiment Station at Beltsville carried on experiments over a period of six years to determine the value of meal made from soybean hay and lespedeza hay as compared with alfalfa meal. They found that any of the three could be used as a source of protein in the diet of hogs. As much as 20 percent of the hog ration may be made up of the hay meals but the best results come from feeding 5 to 10 percent. As to feed value it was found that the soybean meal proved to be the best of the three, alfalfa was next best and the lespedeza was a poor third.

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TITLES DON'T HOLD LAND - "You may have the most legal deed or lease possible and still it may not hold your farm," says C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee. He uses this point in urging farmers to use the Agricultural Conservation Program to help them with the most needed conservation practices on their farms.

Speaking as a farmer, he states, "Too often we think that, because we have a deed tucked away, our land is safe, while actually we may be losing the farm by letting the top-soil get away."

"A deed won't stop melting snow and heavy rains from carrying away the most valuable part of the farm — the top-soil. If the land has been plowed up and down the slope and the drill furrows run the same way, a deed won't keep the water which falls on the land from following these furrows down the hill taking the soil with it.

"The legal description of the land, giving the boundaries, may not change

but, through erosion, the farm can change from a productive farm to a gullied, eroded, worn-out piece of land.

"The value of the farm depends on its ability to produce. What it will produce depends primarily on how much moisture and fertility there is in the top-soil."

The chairman points out that the Agricultural Conservation Program primarily is a means for helping cooperating farmers protect their land.

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WHAT IT COSTS TO BLAST A DITCH - A drainage ditch 12 hundred feet long, 2½ feet deep, and 3 feet wide at the top, was blasted in South Carolina recently at a cost of $206, or a little more than 17 cents a running foot. The work followed specifications of the Agricultural Conservation program and the farmer received assistance to pay for part of the cost of the explosives used.

Local ACP officials explain that farmers have found that the blasting of ditches has a number of advantages. One of the most important is that this method can be used on land that is so wet that ordinary machinery cannot be used. It is quick; requiring only the time needed to set the explosive. A further advantage is that the soil from the ditch is scattered over a wide area and no "spoil" banks are left to prevent water from getting into the ditch.

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SILENT DESTROYERS - Seeing forest fires destroy in a few hours the slowly accumulated wealth of decades, one would not question the necessity for prompt, thorough and aggressive action. This is as true of the silent destroyers, leaching and erosion, as it is of fire.

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NEW MEXICO

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COMMITTEEMEN IN KEY CONSERVATION POSITIONS - What happens to our land in 1948 — the land from which comes our food — will be determined to a large extent by some 9,000 farmers. These 9,000 farmers are in key positions to protect the Nation against the destruction which has come to older countries through soil erosion and depletion.

C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee, explains that these 9,000 farmers are the county committeemen elected to administer the Agricultural Conservation Program at the county level. They are assisted by some 28,000 community committees comprised of from one to three members. In New Mexico there are approximately 93 county committeemen and 450 community committeemen.

These community committeemen are being elected this fall and winter to administer the Agricultural Conservation Program in 1948. Some elections have already been held. Farmers who have been participating in the ACProgram, Sugar Program, Price Support and Loan activities or who have a contract with the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation are eligible to vote in these elections. Each elected committeeman must be a farmer.

The 9,000 farmers who make up the 3,000 county committees of the Nation have the responsibility of passing on all conservation practices carried out under the ACProgram in their counties. They have to decide how the funds allocated to the county are to be spent to get the most conservation for each dollar spent. They and the community committeemen work with the individual farmers in the county in planning the conservation practices to be carried out.

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WIND EROSION MENACE TO 3 of EVERY 10 ACRES - "Wind erosion is a menace to 3 acres out of every 10 in the United States," according to C. V. Hemphill, New Mexico PMA Chairman. "It is hard to realize that the Great Plains which contributed so much to the record-breaking wheat crop of 1947 is all subject to wind erosion.

There are 400 million acres in the Great Plains and another 200 million acres or more west of the Rocky Mountains that are subject to blowing."

The Chairman explained further that the reason these soils blow is that there is not enough vegetation growing on them to serve as a binder. Limited moisture is responsible for the limited growth. Moisture conservation, contends the Chairman, therefore, is one of the most important operations carried on by whoever controls these lands...farmers, ranchers or the government.

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WIND-EROSION CONTROL PRACTICES GIVEN - With the threat of serious wind erosion hanging over several areas of the United States — particularly in the high plains area of the Southwest — farmers are warned to prepare for another period of soil blowing by A. W. Manchester, acting director of PMA's Agricultural Conservation Programs Branch.

This conservation authority says that a review of longtime weather records indicates a real possibility that the great plains area of the Southwest may be entering a period of moisture deficiency of several years duration. He points out, however, that this is not a prediction, only a possibility and a warning to be prepared in the event dry weather continues.

To be prepared, he encouraged a system of farming that will (1) maintain a continuity of ground cover; (2) incorporate the greatest possible amount of crop residue into the surface soil; (3) initiate permanent protective measures, such as terraces and contour strip farming; (4) perform all tillage and seeding on the contour, and (5) use, in time, the tillage measures the emergency situations may dictate.

These emergency measures include listing across the path of the wind, subsoil furrows which leave rows of hard clods across at right angles to the prevailing wind and similar practices which check the cutting effects of wind.

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CONTOUR SEEDING SAVES SOIL - Rain and snow water will take off enough good top-soil without man's up-and-down-the-slope plow furrows and drill rows to help it, says

C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee. The chairman points out that one of the major accomplishments of the Agricultural Conservation Program is the help given farmers in changing over from "up and down" to contour farming.

Under the 1946 ACP, cooperating farmers seeded close-drilled crops on the contour on 3,615,000 acres and intertilled crops on the contour on 6,797,000 acres. Since 1936, when the program started, more than 79,000,000 acres of crops have been seeded on the contour.

One of the best places to stop erosion is right on the field where it starts the chairman points out. And one of the best ways to do that is to stop the rain and snow run-off before it can start cutting gullies.

Plowing and seeding across the slope instead of up and down will help to do that. Instead of the plow furrows and drill rows being channels for the run-off they serve as small dams to hold back the water. The little trickles of water are checked before they get together to form gully making streams.

Quite often, the chairman explains, the water held back by contours results in enough added moisture to double the yield over crops seeded "up and down." In fitting the farming pattern to the natural lay of the land, farmers get their crop rows on the level. Water stays in each furrow or implement mark and soaks into the ground. Tests have shown that it also saves tractor fuel. Comparative tests of contour and up and down plowing on an 8 percent slope have shown that in a given time a farmer plowing on the contour can plow 10 percent more land and that acre for acre his fuel consumption will be 10 percent less.

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MORE CONSERVATION ** MORE GRASS ** MORE MEAT - More meat from grass and less from grain as a part of the program to save grain to share with the hungry of Europe has been made possible through the Agricultural Conservation Program.

According to _____, Chairman of the _____County Agricultural Conservation Committee, many ranchers have been able to nearly double their production from the same area as a result of carrying out soil and water-conservation practices on the range. Fortunately, he says, the same practices which help to conserve soil and water also improve the range for livestock production.

He said that few people are aware of the great amount of conservation carried out on the range. Under the 1946 Agricultural Conservation Program, for instance,

ranchers -- most of them in the 13 Western States -- carried out the grazing land-management practice on 94,849,000 acres. To qualify, this practice requires properly grazing the range so that grass is given a chance to reseed and a good vegetative cover maintained. This cover holds the moisture and helps check erosion. And more beef, lamb and mutton, and wool have been produced on ranges that were properly grazed, the county chairman added.

To give some over-grazed areas a chance to come back, deferred grazing was carried out on 3,232,000 acres under the 1946 program. In many instances, this built up a reserve for 1947.

As a means of better distributing livestock on the range and as a check on erosion, 87,178 stock-water dams were built under the 1946 ACP. To reestablish vegetation, 4,304 acres of range and pasture were seeded to grass. To protect timber and grass from fire, 16,099 miles of fireguards were constructed.

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SUDAN GRASS MAKES GOOD HOG PASTURE - Possibility that pastures can be used profitably in hog production on a far wider scale is indicated by results obtained at Purdue University experiment station. It was found that sudan grass pasture can be used for hog production in the same way as alfalfa, clover, and permanent pastures.

Sudan grass is not as valuable for hog feed as alfalfa but it usually is grown on land that will not produce alfalfa. Sudan grass also is one of the most widely adapted catch crops. It can be used on land where other crops have been killed out by drought, cold or floods. It is an excellent hot-weather pasture, making vigorous growth during hot summer months.

In terms of the amount of feed saved it was found that alfalfa saved about 2½ cents a day for each hog run on pasture, carrying about 20 hogs per acre. Thus, producing about $15 worth of feed a month. The sudan grass provided feed worth about 1.4 cents a day per hog. No exact measurement of the carrying capacity of the sudan grass was made. However, it did grow so fast that it had to be clipped twice during the growing season.

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MORE FERTILIZER TO BE AVAILABLE - Fertilizers are needed for food production. As food production has increased in the United States since 1939, the use of fertilizer has increased also. There will be increased amounts of fertilizers available for increased food and feed production this coming year, for fertilizer supplies for American farmers will be larger than they were last year. About 816,000 tons of nitrogen will be available, 4 percent more than last year. There will also be about 1,850,000 tons of phosphate, an increase of 6 percent over last year; and about 900,000 tons of potash, an increase of 5 percent. Compared with prewar, about twice as much fertilizer will be available for American farmers in commercial channels next year.

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WHY PAY FARMERS? - Why pay farmers for carrying out soil and water conservation practices? Replying to that question, _____, Chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee, says the question — as it is usually put — is itself a little misleading. Payments under the Agricultural Conservation Program are made to assist farmers in carrying out these conservation practices. The farmer stands about half the cost and all the labor of many practices.

But the county chairman went on to say that the main reason why payments are made to farmers to help them carry out conservation is that the conservation is vital to the Nation and the program of helping farmers is the most efficient and economical method of getting the job done. "It's a job that has to be done if we continue abundant production," he said, "and this is the best way we've found to get it done."

In the first place, if the erosion and depletion were allowed to go unchecked as it did for too long a time, the Nation would pay many times over in higher comparative food prices, lower quality food, and a lower standard of living. Eventually, as has happened in older countries, it would mean the breakdown of our civilization. Three of the nine inches of topsoil we had when the Pilgrim fathers landed has been lost already.

Next, telling farmers what ought to be done and even showing them has not been enough to get the conservation job done. They help, but some — in fact many — farmers cannot spare the money it takes. Many farmers are short-term tenants, and others for various reasons do not follow the instructions or heed the demonstrations.

But, with a helping hand through their own agricultural conservation association, more than two-thirds of the farmers of the Nation are building the terraces, planting on the contour, applying the lime and phosphate, building the dams, and planting the grass that will conserve and build the soil.

Dividends to the Nation — to the consumers and taxpayers — are an abundance of good food, at prices below what they would be if production were much less as a result of neglecting the land. And, through the carrying out of these conservation practices, we are building future security just as essential to our national defense as big guns and atom bombs — maybe more essential, because without enough food all other forms of defense are weakened.

Then, too, all of us — whether we farm or not — depend on the land for our food, which means life itself, and by the same token we should share in the responsibility of protecting that land.

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SMALL SEEDS MOVING MORE SLOWLY THAN USUAL - Most of the small seeds of the hay crops moved from dealers more slowly than usual in the month between October 15 and November 15 and at somewhat higher prices.

Red clover moved a little slower than ordinarily, and its price was up $4.50 to an average of $47.83 a hundred pounds.

Alsike moved sluggishly during the first part of the month and then somewhat more rapidly toward the end. It went up $4.17 a hundred to sell at an average price at mid-November of $34.17.

Alfalfa seed was the slowest mover of all. About three-fourths as much of the 1947 crop had been sold by the middle of November as ordinarily. The price had gone up $1.34 a hundred to an average of $24.17.

Timothy has been moving a little slower than average and the price went up 35 cents a hundred to $4.73.

Sweet clover seed also moved slowly. By November 15, 66 percent had moved, as compared with an average as of that date of 74 percent. The price had advanced 67 cents a hundred to a level of $10.95.

Lespedeza seed was delayed somewhat in harvesting. Only 11 percent of it had been sold by November 15, less than half as much as usual. The price was a little higher $9.18 a hundred, as compared with the average of $7.21 on that date.

Sudan grass has moved faster than usual. Half of the seed crop was sold by November 15; about 32 percent of the crop is usually sold by that time. Its prices had advanced 4 cents a hundred to a general level of $6.27.

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FEEDING TAKES MOST OF U. S. GRAIN - Of the total U. S. quantity of grain and grain products and byproducts used in the past year, about 75 percent was fed to livestock; about 15 percent was used for domestic food, seed, and all industrial uses; and about 10 percent was exported. This 10 percent, however, constituted about 80 percent of the total U. S. exports of more than 19 million tons of food.

This helps to explain why any substantial saving of grain -- for larger exports -- must come largely from a reduction in the feeding of grain.

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FARMER AND AGRICULTURAL EXPERTS DISCUSS NATIONAL PROBLEMS - C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the State Committee, Production and Marketing Administration, has just returned from Colorado Springs where he attended the PMA National Five-Day Conference. He was accompanied by Archie Vance, Executive Officer, and Leslie Martin, member of the New Mexico State Committee.

"The conference covered the entire field from the production of crops in California to their ultimate delivery to the consumer in New York City," Mr. Hemphill stated.

"It is the first time in my memory that a group of dirt farmers from 48 states and its territories have met with experts on the production, processing, grading, transportation, storage and marketing of agricultural products," he continued.

According to Hemphill the conference went on record as favoring abundant production, federal assistance for soil conservation, and fair prices to both farmers and consumers.

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DECEMBER 31 DEADLINE FOR 1947 ACP PRACTICES - While being reminded of only so many shopping days until Christmas, farmers of _____ County also should not forget that all conservation practices under the 1947 Agricultural Conservation Program must be completed by December 31, 1947.

Farmers who have completed practices and who have not reported them to the county Agricultural Conservation Association office should do so at once, says _____, Chairman of the County Agricultural Conservation Committee.

Limited administrative funds will not allow for extra help to take care of a last-minute rush job in the county office, Mr. _____ said. "The only way we

can get the job done of checking compliance and putting through applications for payment is for farmers to cooperate by letting us know promptly the practices they have carried out. Delay in reporting practices piles up a lot of work at the last minute that we will not be able to do when it should be done this year. This will cause a delay in sending through applications for payment and may mean several months delay in payments."

The chairman urges farmers to report conservation practices as soon as they are completed.

"Farmers who have not completed practices and who intend to do so," said the chairman, "should remember that December 31, 1947, is the cut-off date for completing conservation practices under the 1947 program."

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CONSERVATION PAYS - Conservation work has paid well on the rolling farm lands of Clyde Kennedy in Nemaha County, along the Missouri River in southeastern Nebraska. With his county Agricultural Conservation Committee, Mr. Kennedy worked out the conservation plans for 80 of the 323 acres in his farm. One of the committeemen ran lines for waterways and dams. This and other conservation work on that 80 was all done during 1947. Ten acres of the land had been so badly damaged that it couldn't be farmed. Now it is on the way back to comparable production with the rest of the 80. Mr. Kennedy and the county committee feel that the 80 can now be farmed with practically no damage from erosion.

Mr. Kennedy says that the conservation work has paid well from a money point of view also. It cost $2,905 altogether. The ACP assistance payments amounted to $459 leaving $2,446 which Mr. Kennedy paid. Part of that cost was returned to Mr. Kennedy in the increased value of his land. Figuring that the 10 acres that were reclaimed would yield about the same as other farm lands in the community, he would get about 50 bushels of corn to the acre, which would bring a current annual return of $112 an acre, or a gross return of $1,120.

The 80 acres now can be farmed to prevent erosion and fertility can be maintained or increased indefinitely.

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CONSERVATION NEEDS SHOWN IN STUDY - With the continued need for all-out production to meet the demand in this country and to aid hungry people in other lands, this is not the time to ease up on production, says _____, Chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee. "All of us," he states, "should be aware of the soil- and water-conservation problems we are building up through growing a high percentage of soil-depleting crops on the land."

In calling attention to this problem, _____ said: "We need to do all we can to produce the food that will be required to feed our own people and to share with the hungry. But when we look at estimates of acreages of soil-depleting crops as compared with the acres of crops which help conserve and protect the soil from erosion, we realize that now more than ever we need to do all we can to conserve soil and water."

Mr. _____ pointed out that the November 1947 crop report showed that, in a number of States, 50 percent or more of the cropland was used for cultivated row crops (exclusive of commercial vegetables). In only a few States did these cultivated row crops use less than 15 percent of the cropland. Small grains accounted for 61 percent of the cropland in one State. In a number of States, more than 30 percent was so used.

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FARMERS ENCOURAGED TO GREEN MANURE LAND - One of the very effective ways of restoring fertility to the soil and at the same time making the land easier to handle is to plow under a good crop of green manure, says _____, Chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee.

The green-manuring practice will be included again in the Agricultural Conservation Program for 1948, the chairman states. He advises that the approved crop must be plowed under to qualify for assistance and prior approval of the county committee must be obtained before the practice is carried out.

The chairman explains that the organic matter turned under releases plant food for the growth of other crops. At the same time, the structure of the soil is improved, allowing more moisture from rain or snow to soak into the ground. This reduces run-off and cuts down on erosion.

Among the crops approved for plowing under as green manure are sweet clover, Austrian winter peas, blue lupine, alsike and ryegrass.

The county Agricultural Conservation Office has a list of the crops which are approved under ACP for plowing under as green manure.

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RESEARCH ON SEEDS RECOMMENDED - Recent recommendations on research to be carried out under the Research and Marketing Act are important to all farmers participating in the Agricultural Conservation Program. Grasses and legumes are among the most important conservation crops and any improvement in quantity and quality of seeds of these crops is important in conservation. Highest priority is given, therefore, to building up stocks of seeds so that farmers can always obtain needed seeds. Methods to maintain the identity of seed are to be studied. A project on the best methods of storage, and another on the standardization of methods of testing also are recommended.

In the production field, recommendations include studies to develop machinery for harvesting legume and grass seeds to determine the reasons for low seed yields and to study further the poisonous effects of different chemicals commonly used for insects, weeds and plant diseases.

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